IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An image display controlling apparatus for adjusting the contrast of an image, said apparatus comprising:

discriminating means for receiving an image signal, for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means ~~being restricted to within~~ having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means for receiving the control signal and for controlling the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means based on the control signal;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require said illumination controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to be below the predetermined range, said illumination controlling means instead maintains the illumination

brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said level adjustment means lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting value until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

2.-4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The image display controlling apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

display image generating means for converting the image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

6. (previously presented) The image display controlling apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said display means is a liquid crystal display.

7. (currently amended) An image display controlling method for adjusting the contrast of an image, said method comprising:

discriminating a signal format of an image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating step;

generating a control signal based on the discrimination signal;

adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the control signal;

displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level; and

controlling the brightness of the illumination provided for the displayed image based on the control signal, the brightness of the illumination ~~being restricted to within~~ having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require the illumination brightness be below the predetermined range, said illumination step instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said adjusting step lowers the luminance signal level until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

8.-10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) The image display controlling method according to claim 7, wherein the displayed image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level is converted into a signal matched to a display unit.

12. (previously presented) The image display controlling method according to claim 7, wherein the displayed image is displayed using a liquid crystal display.

13. (currently amended) An imaging apparatus, comprising:

image signal generating means for imaging an object to generate an image signal;

discriminating means for receiving the image signal, for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level in the input image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means ~~being restricted to within~~ having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means for receiving the control signal and for controlling the brightness of the illumination provided by said illumination means based on said control signal;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require said illumination controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to be below the predetermined range, said illumination controlling means instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said level adjustment means lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting value until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

14.-16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented) The imaging apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising

display image generating means for converting the image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

18. (previously presented) The imaging apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said display means is a liquid crystal display.

19. (currently amended) A viewfinder device for viewing an image based on an image signal provided by an imaging apparatus, said viewfinder device comprising:

discriminating means for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means ~~being restricted to within~~ having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means for receiving the control signal and for controlling the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means based on the control signal;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require said illumination controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to be below the predetermined range, said illumination controlling means instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said level adjustment means

lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting value until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

20.-22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, further comprising:

displayed image generating means for converting the image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

24. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, wherein said display means is a liquid crystal display.

25. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, wherein said controller means includes means for exchanging the control information with said imaging apparatus, and the viewfinder device makes an inquiry to the imaging apparatus as to whether the imaging apparatus is controlling, to adjust the contrast of the displayed image, at least one of the brightness of the illumination and the luminance signal level of the image signal.